

Message Text

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C O N F I D E N T I A L PARIS 28101

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR CH FR

SUBJECT: FRENCH VIEWS OF THE TRANSITION IN CHINA

1. QUAI DEPUTY DIRECTOR FOR ASIA LECLERCQ IN DISCUSS-
ING FRENCH VIEWS OF POST-MAO CHINA EXPRESSED BALANCED
OPINIONS WHICH CLOSELY PARALLELED US ESTIMATES WE HAVE
SEEN. HE NOTED THE DIFFICULTIES IN PREDICTING EVENTS IN
CHINA, SPOKE OF THE USUAL GROUPS, CITED THE INDICATIONS
OF CONTINUATION OF DOMESTIC AND FOREIGN POLICY, AND
CAME TO PREDICTABLE, CAUTIOUS CONCLUSIONS. HE RAISED
THREE POINTS WHICH MAY BE OF SOME INTEREST TO ADDRESSEES.

2. SOVIET INTERVENTION.

FROM HIS POSTINGS IN BOTH PEKING AND MOSCOW,
LECLERCQ HAD COME TO THE CONCLUSION THAT THE USSR WOULD
INTERVENE IN CHINA IF THE OCCASION PRESENTED ITSELF,
AND THE CHINESE LEADERSHIP SHARES THIS VIEW. THE
SOVIETS WOULD OBVIOUSLY BE PLEASED IF THERE WERE SOME
FACTION EITHER IN THE PROVINCES OR COUNTRYWIDE WHICH
CALLED FOR SOVIET ASSISTANCE AGAINST ITS RIVALS FOR
POWER, BUT THE SOVIETS WOULD NOT CONSIDER THIS THE
ONLY CIRCUMSTANCE WHICH GAVE THEM AN OPENING FOR
INTERVENTION. THE LEADERS OF THE CURRENT FACTIONS
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SEEM ALL TO WISH TO AVAOID CREATING ANY OCCASION FOR THE

SOVIETS TO INTERVENE AND THEY WILL THEREFORE
PROBABLY CARRY ON THEIR STRUGGLE COMPLETELY BEHIND THE
SCENES.

3. PRC POLICY TOWARD THE US.

LECLERCQ HAD NOTICED THAT HUA, IN HIS RECENT
SPEECH, HAD TREATED (AMERICAN)IMPERIALISM AND SOCIAL
IMPERIALISM ON A MORE EQUAL FOOTING THAN IN THE PAST
WHEN, AFTER ATTACKING THE TWO SUPERPOWERS, THE CHINESE
GENERALLY ADDED SPECIAL JABS AT THE SOVIETS. IT WAS
ALSO SURPRISING THAT HUA WOULD HAVE BROUGHT UP SPECI-
FICALLY US ACTIONS IN KOREA AND VIETNAM. LECLERCQ
WONDERED WHETHER THE NEW LEADERSHIP MIGHT BE MORE CRITI-
CAL OF THE US, PERHAPS MERELY TO ENCOURAGE GREATER US
RESPONSE CONCERNING TAIWAN AND NORMALIZATION OF RELA-
TIONS.

4. US PREFERENCE FOR "RADICALS."

THE FRENCH IN PEKING HAD SUGGESTED THAT THE US
WOULD GAIN FROM AN INCREASE IN THE POWER OF THE RADICALS
BECAUSE OF THEIR DOCTRINAIRE OPPOSITION TO THE SOVIETS.
LECLERCQ HAD NOTED PARTICULARLY THE EFFORTS WHICH CHIANG
CHING HAD MADE TO SHOW HER GOOD RELATIONS WITH THE US.
IN ADDITION, THE MODERATES MIGHT SEE SOME ADVANTAGE IN
MODERATING THE ANTI-SOVIET RHETORIC IN ORDER TO HAVE
GREATER LEVERAGE IN THEIR RELATIONS WITH THE US AND
EUROPE. LECLERCQ WAS PERSONALLY INCLINED TO BELIEVE
THAT THE RADICALS' "FRIENDSHIP" WITH THE US WAS ONLY
TACTICAL AND RELATED TO THE USSR AND THE INTERNAL STRUG-
GLE. SUCH A "FRIENDSHIP" WOULD BE SUPERFICIAL
AND UNRELIABLE FROM THE POINT OF VIEW OF US/PRC RELA-
TIONS.
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